

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Thursday 26 January 1978

CG NIDC 78/021C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Thursday, 26 January 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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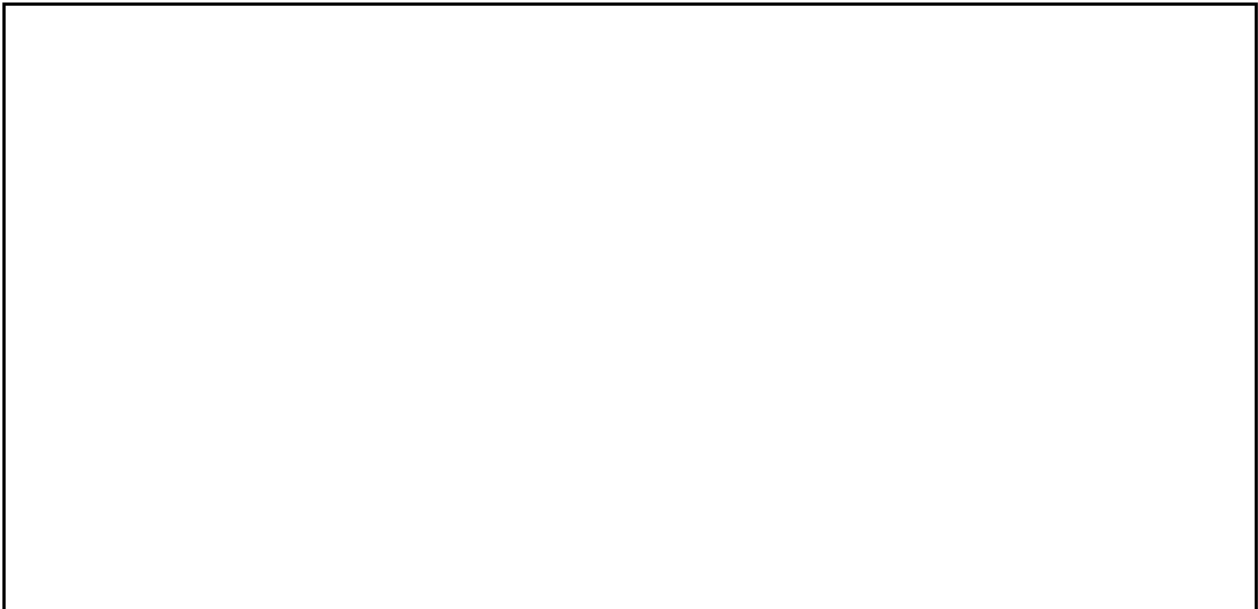
ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA: Situation Report

25X1 [redacted] //Heavy fighting continued for the fourth day in the northern Ogaden, but the situation is still unclear. The Somalis assert that they nearly destroyed a Cuban artillery battalion near Harar and captured several Cuban prisoners [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] The Egyptian military attache in Somalia advised US Embassy officials to be wary of reports of initial Somali successes in the current round of fighting because the materiel advantage was clearly tipping in Ethiopia's favor.//

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25X1 [redacted] //The situation in Harar itself is also unclear, but Colonel Halim, the Egyptian military attache in Somalia, told US Embassy officials yesterday that he does not think the Somalis have enough troops inside the city to secure a foothold.//

25X1 [redacted] //Halim cautioned embassy representatives not to be misled by early Somali successes, pointing out that the materiel advantage was tipping toward Ethiopia and that the "chaotic" Somali logistic situation had not improved. Halim appears to have good access to Somali planning, [redacted]

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[] The Somali Foreign Minister told US Embassy officials yesterday that Somali forces fighting near Harar had surrounded and nearly destroyed a Cuban artillery battalion left exposed by retreating Ethiopians. He also confirmed press reports that Cubans had been captured in the fighting and said Cuban prisoners would be displayed to the world.

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CUBA-ETHIOPIA: Mobilization

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[] *Cubans are being mobilized for duty in Ethiopia, according to the Papal Nunciature in Havana. Some of those being mobilized were previously exempt from military service. Papal diplomats have told the US Interests Section that priests from different parts of the country are reporting the call-up of mechanics, doctors, and technicians of various types, who are being informed that they will spend one year of their three-year military obligation in Ethiopia.*

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[] Although we do not know the extent of the call-up, the fact that priests in different parts of the country felt compelled to report the matter to the nunciature suggests that the mobilization is not limited to a few hundred men.

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[] Negative reactions have been reported--a few refusals to serve and signs of family anguish--but these are to be expected under the circumstances in Cuba, where family ties are strong. Although apparently not widespread, these reactions are likely to be intensified by recent press reports that Cuban troops have been captured by the Somalis in the Ogaden. The Castro regime will have little difficulty controlling negative reactions, but continued mobilizations, especially if they are accompanied by new reports of captured, killed, missing, or wounded, will erode popular support for Cuban military adventurism in Africa.

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NICARAGUA: Business Strike

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[REDACTED] Followers of murdered Nicaraguan journalist Pedro Joaquin Chamorro are successfully promoting a business strike. Ostensibly, the strikers are demanding a full investigation of the murder, but their real aim is to create conditions that will force President Somoza to resign. Somoza's support has eroded, but we believe his power base--mainly centered in the National Guard and the Liberal Party--is still strong enough to withstand this maneuver.

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[REDACTED] The strike has surprised even business leaders and suggests--in addition to a certain degree of intimidation--the surfacing of discontent within the country. Other events of the past week indicate some erosion of Somoza's support within the Liberal Party as well as heightened activity on the part of the opposition which has now called for his resignation.

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[REDACTED] There is no indication, however, that there has been any significant loss of Liberal support for Somoza or that a strong leader is ready to emerge from opposition ranks. [REDACTED]

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CHINA-BURMA-NEPAL: Teng's Trip

Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping arrives in Burma today for a five-day official visit. He will travel to Nepal next week after a two-day rest stop in China. His trip underscores the relatively energetic foreign policy China has pursued since Teng's political rehabilitation last year. As the number-three man in the Chinese leadership, Teng is the highest Chinese official to travel abroad since the death of Mao Tse-tung in September 1976.

//The visits to Burma and Nepal reflect China's emphasis on maintaining good relations with Third World countries, especially those that strive to remain free of Soviet influence. Both countries have maintained comparatively close relations with China, and Teng can expect a warm reception in both.//

//Teng may address the only major problem in Chinese-Burmese relations--China's support of the Communist-led insurgency in northeastern Burma.

Peking continues to provide some military supplies and training to the Burmese rebels.//

//There are some indications that the Chinese would like to appear to be moving away from some earlier, more radical policies that reflected the influence of the now-purged "gang of four"--such as active support of the Burmese rebels. Teng, however, probably will attempt to avoid any clear-cut commitments on this issue, as other Chinese officials have done in past talks with the Burmese.//

Teng's trip to Nepal will be largely ceremonial. It will provide him with another platform, however, from which to

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warn Asia against alleged Soviet machinations and to praise Nepalese efforts to regain at least some independence from India. Indian diplomats have expressed annoyance at Teng's trip, suggesting that it will do nothing to improve the brittle relationship between Peking and New Delhi. [REDACTED]

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BRIEFS

Tunisia

[REDACTED] Tunisian labor leader Habib Achour has called a 24-hour general strike for today following several violent incidents between labor and government supporters. The government is prepared to crack down on the labor movement if the strike turns violent.

[REDACTED] //There were sporadic incidents between members of Achour's union and the police last weekend. On the night of 24 January, a labor demonstration in Tunis turned into a minor riot. The union has said the disorders were instigated by government provocateurs.//

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[REDACTED] President Bourguiba reshuffled his cabinet last month at Prime Minister Nour's insistence, in part as a warning against further agitation; the Prime Minister is unlikely to allow any significant challenge to the government to develop.

South Africa

[REDACTED] The South African Government has announced cabinet changes affecting the country's more than 17 million blacks. C. P. Mulder, who has been Minister of Interior and Information and South Africa's second most important political figure, has been named Minister of Bantu Affairs in addition. A new Ministry of Bantu Education has also been created to deal with the black student riots and boycotts that have plagued the country for more than 18 months. [REDACTED]

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